

Hundreds of volunteers comb neighborhood for teen

BY KATIE HEPBURN

Community members spoke loudly Saturday without having to utter one word.

The presence of more than 500 volunteers to help search for missing teen Joanna Rogers said more than words could — that when tragedy strikes in Lubbock, the community stands ready to help.

The search for Joanna started at 9 a.m. in the Xtreme Village parking lot at 1201 84th St. and continued throughout the day. The search resumes at 9 a.m. today.

for the search effort, which was double what was expected.

Joanna has been missing since May 4, and the search this weekend will cover a 10-mile radius around her home. United Response Search and Rescue is a volunteer group from the Dallas area that is coordinating the search.

As volunteers waited for the search to begin Saturday morning, most voiced similar reasons for spending their day helping the Rogers family.

"We've got kids the same age that go to her school," volunteer Jim Fallas said. "Plus, it's the right thing to do."

Doris Stalcup said a simple desire to help, plus imagining herself in the place of Joanna's parents, led her to help. Her husband, John, said the display of people helping other people is typical of West Texans.

Several volunteers brought horses to ride as they searched. Ray Cooper was among them.

"I've got two girls of my own," he said, "and I want to see if we can help find this one."

Holland said buses were used to transport teams to various search sites.

Sheriff's Sgt. Greg Parrott said there are some targeted areas of interest that will be searched, but for security reasons, only team leaders know those locations. Teams are led by a local law enforcement officer and a member of the volunteer search and rescue team.

Parrott said the clues and evidence volunteers are searching for are generic — any articles of clothing or other items the search party deems to be of interest.

He said what they are looking for is vague because it is uncertain what might be of help.

Sheila Holland, assistant operations director for United Response Search and Rescue Team, said Joanna's family was overwhelmed by the turnout

Sheriff's Lt. Cody Scott said nothing of substance was found Saturday.

Because of safety concerns, Holland said no one under 16 is allowed to participate in the search.

Volunteers coming today are asked to bring identification, park in the grass fields next to the Xtreme Village and sign in at a table in the parking lot.

Emergency Medical Services was stationed at the site and Disaster Relief of Texas, a group from Plains, set up a tent with beverages and refreshments that were available throughout the day.

The group provided sandwiches for the volunteers' lunch.

katie.hepburn@lubbockonline.com 766-8742

Click here to return to story:

http://lubbockonline.com/stories/052304/loc_052304092.shtml